

Letter from Joseph Henry to Alexander Graham Bell, April 29, 1875

Copy of a letter written in 1875 by Joseph Henry, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, to Alexander Graham Bell, that is of value in that Professor Henry writes: "I think your experiments are new and that they offer the true explanation of the phenomenon you have observed." (Original letter in "Dr. Bell's Room" in "Biographical Material"). Smithsonian Institution, Washington, April 29th 1875 A. Graham Bell, Salem, Mass. Dear Sir:

Your letter of April 2nd was duly received but a press of business has prevented an earlier reply.

I think your experiments are new and that they offer the true explanation of the phenomenon you have observed. Many years ago I made a series of experiments, with the late Mr. Jos. Saxton, with a galvanic trough of about 60 cells; the current of which produced a light between two carbon points. When an image of this light was thrown on the ceiling, by means of a rapidly revolving mirror placed obliquely to the axis of rotation which was perpendicular to the horizon a circle of light was produced not entirely continuous of the same intensity, but marked with brighter and lighter shades indicating pulsatory action in the current. This fact appears to have a bearing on the phenomenon you have observed.

Very truly yours, JOSEPH HENRY Sect. S. I.